

House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development
February 23, 2023
Fred Kenney
Executive Director, Addison County Economic Development Corporation
and
President, RDCs of Vermont
H. 10 and VEGI Program

H.10 – new draft

- RDCs appreciate being a part of the conversation about the VEGI program
- We also appreciate the work the committee has done to learn about the program and the time you have dedicated to hearing from different stakeholders
- We also greatly appreciate the Committee position to extend the sunset, make some immediate changes, and study issues that are of concern
- We have some suggestions that track our earlier focus on transparency, simplification, and access:
 - Transparency:
 - We understand the Committee position on recording VEPC Executive Sessions
 - This is an extreme step that many are worried could impact and have consequences for other public bodies
 - The bill could be clearer on what can and can't be done with that information.
 - Since it will involve information exempted from disclosure by Vermont's public records law, we recommend adding provisions stating exactly what that information can be used for and restating that the information cannot be made public.
 - For example, for the Auditor, use should be limited only to Audits following General Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS).
 - The RDCs also recommend an addition to the immediate program changes in version 2 of H10:
 - disaggregation of post-award data by company.

- The data is available from Tax, they just need authority to include it in the annual reports
 - To be clear, we are talking about the jobs, payroll, capex, and incentive amounts paid each year AFTER incentive claims are verified
- On the study:
 - We may have more comments after you decide how the study will be done – through a panel or RFP.
 - Either way, we recommend that the opportunity not be lost to tap the experience of your economic development partners and practitioners in the field who use these tools to advance our mutual goals
- We know you don't want to overload the study mandate, but recommend including elements that look at:
 - How the current program be simplified
 - How the current program can be made more accessible to all regions of the state and **even more** accessible to small businesses
 - And, provide ideas on other incentive options for you to consider